Cut in the US aid to India

880. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a drastic cut in the US aid to India after Mr. George Bush took over as the President of that country; and

(b) if so, what are the details there of ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Formation of Committee for selection of Pilgrims to Kailas and Mansarovar

881. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) what is the procedure of selecting pilgrims to Kailas and Mansarovar pilgrimages ;

(b) what is the number of persons who had applied and those who were selected during the last three years ;

(c) whether Government propose to form a Committee on the lines of the Haj Committee in this regard ; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof; if not, what are the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH) : (a) Applications for the Kailash and Mansarovar pilgrims are invited through an advertisement in major national and regional dailies and also over AIR and Doordarshan. Pilgrims are selected by Government from the applicants through a draw of lots and subject to a medical examination to certify the fitness of pilgrims for high altitude tracking.

(b) Information is as follows :—

Year	No. of applications received	No. of selected pilgrims
1936	1000 (Approx.)	171
1987	1000 (Approx.)	194
1988	1000 (Approx.)	202

(c) and (d) No Sir, It is not proposed to establish a committee since the number of pilgrims proceeding on the pilgrimage is not very large in view of the difficulties of terrain and climate in the high altitude areas, the need to ensure safety of pilgrims in these region and the limited facilities presently available in remote areas along the route in India and China which can cater only to a small number of pilgrims.